

A record of Oberländer's Ground Thrush *Zoothera oberlaenderi*, with photographs and a description of the alarm-call

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Une observation de la Grive d'Oberlaender *Zoothera oberlaenderi*, avec photos et description du cri d'alarme. Le 13 septembre 2007, une Grive d'Oberlaender *Zoothera oberlaenderi* adulte a été observée au Parc National de Bwindi Impénétrable, Ouganda. La première description du cri d'alarme ainsi que des photos de cette espèce sont présentées.

Oberländer's Ground Thrush *Zoothera oberlaenderi* is a rare and elusive passerine restricted to north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC; Congo-Kinshasa) and western Uganda. It is known from just a handful of localities; in Uganda specifically only from Semliki National Park (Bwamba Forest) and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (Clement & Hathaway 2000). In the latter it inhabits lowland primary and transitional forest at 700–1,935 m (Urban *et al.* 1997, Gottschalk & Pomeroy 2010), but is absent from secondary forest (Collar 2005). The species is listed as Near Threatened (BirdLife International 2011). Gottschalk & Pomeroy (2010) suggest its status should be reconsidered because of a lack of records from sites where it has been recorded previously in DRC and, most notably, its apparent absence from the Semliki Valley in Uganda, despite extensive recent surveys.

On 13 September 2007, in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, I was walking a trail towards Buhoma at *c.*13.30 hrs when I spotted a

Zoothera in the open with the sunlight shining on it. I identified the bird as Oberländer's Ground Thrush based on the black eyestripe and the broken white eye-ring. The location (*c.*01°00'31.5108"N 29°37'5.9628"E; 1,557 m) was close to where a nest of the species had been found six months previously, in March 2007 (Gottschalk & Ampeire 2008). I took several photographs (Fig. 1), and, on closer approach, the bird stood up (Fig. 2) and entered the dense trailside vegetation where it was glimpsed moving around. Alarm-calls then emanated from the same area, which I recognised as that of a *Zoothera* sp., based on a previous observation and recording of Kivu Ground Thrush *Z. tanganjicae* in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (at >2,000 m, although this species occurs down to 1,500 m: T. Gottschalk, pers. comm.), and Grey Ground Thrush *Z. princei* in Semliki National Park (at 700 m) in 2004. I recorded the Oberländer's Ground Thrush calls using a Marantz PMD 670 digital recorder and a Sennheiser ME67 shotgun microphone.



Figures 1–2. Oberländer's Ground Thrush *Zoothera oberlaenderi*, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda, 13 September 2007 (Alexander N. G. Kirschel)

Grive d'Oberlaender *Zoothera oberlaenderi*, Parc National de Bwindi Impénétrable, Ouganda, 13 septembre 2007 (Alexander N. G. Kirschel)

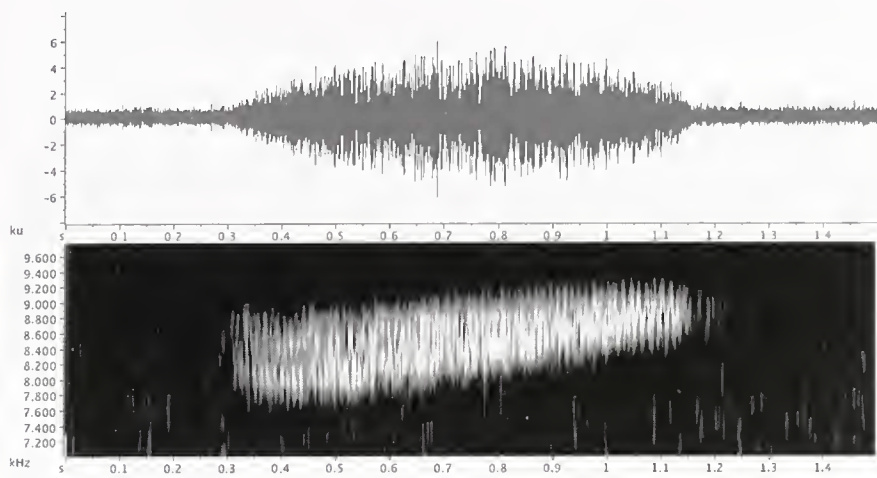


Figure 3. Waveform (above) and spectrogram (Fast Fourier Transformation (FFT) size: 256) of the alarm-call of Oberländer's Ground Thrush *Zoothera oberlaenderi*, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, 13 September 2007 (Alexander N. G. Kirschel). This was the first call recorded. Figure prepared using Raven 1.4 (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology).

Forme d'onde (en haut) et spectrogramme (Fast Fourier Transformation (FFT): 256) du cri d'alarme de la Grive d'Oberlaender *Zoothera oberlaenderi*, Parc National de Bwindi Impénétrable, 13 septembre 2007 (Alexander N. G. Kirschel). Il s'agit du premier cri enregistré (voir texte). La figure a été produite avec Raven 1.4 (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology).

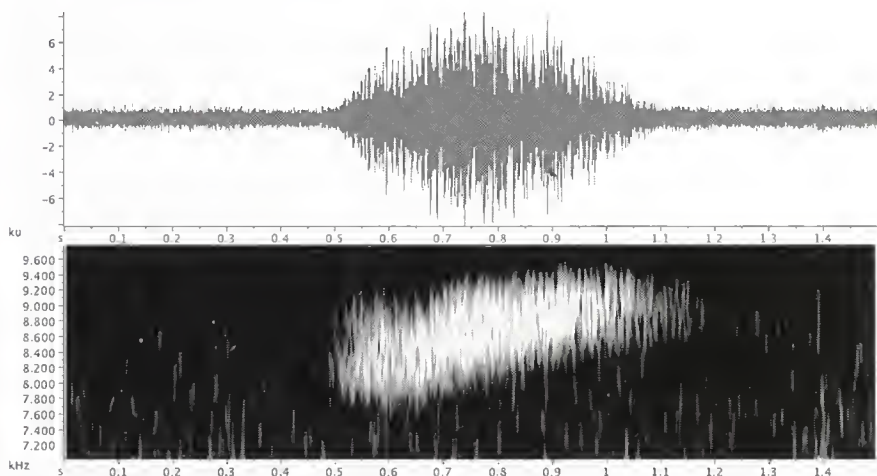


Figure 4. Waveform (above) and spectrogram (FFT: 256) of the fourth alarm-call given by Oberländer's Ground Thrush *Zoothera oberlaenderi*, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, 13 September 2007 (Alexander N. G. Kirschel). Note how this call is shorter and extends to higher frequencies. This was produced in a series of four calls, fairly evenly spaced, two minutes after the first call. These were presumably emitted by a second individual. Figure prepared using Raven 1.4 (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology).

Forme d'onde (en haut) et spectrogramme (FFT : 256) du quatrième cri d'alarme émis par la Grive d'Oberlaender *Zoothera oberlaenderi*, Parc National de Bwindi Impénétrable, 13 septembre 2007 (Alexander N. G. Kirschel). Noter comment ce cri est plus court et s'étend à de plus hautes fréquences. Il a été produit dans une série de quatre cris, assez espacés, deux minutes après le premier cri. Ces derniers cris venaient de l'autre côté de la piste, probablement d'un second individu. La figure a été produite avec Raven 1.4 (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology).

The alarm-call can be described as a rising, high-frequency trill. It ranges at 7.8–9.4 kHz in frequency (Figs. 3–4) and 0.55–0.85 seconds in duration. Five calls were recorded, possibly from two different individuals. There was a gap of nearly two minutes between the first alarm-call and the following four calls, which were delivered more regularly, with pauses of 5–10 seconds between each call, and came from the other side of the trail, presumably from a different individual.

To my knowledge these are the first recordings of the alarm-call of Oberländer's Ground Thrush, and the first photographs of an entire bird (*cf.* Gottschalk & Ampeire 2008).

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